

VZCZCXRO5044
PP RUEHQU
DE RUEHPU #1240/01 1981631
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 171631Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6528
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1594
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1413
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY 0854
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1263

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 001240

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/17/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: PREVAL NEEDS A PUSH ON ELECTIONS

REF: A. SECSTATE 82617
[1](#)B. PORT AU PRINCE 1133
[1](#)C. PORT AU PRINCE 1134

PORT AU PR 00001240 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).
)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Since post and Department first addressed the issue of proceeding with indirect elections and subsequent senatorial elections, post has determined through consultations in Haiti that the indirect elections will not produce a Permanent Electoral Council (CEP) in time for that body to organize on-schedule senatorial elections. Post is working to build consensus, first among the Core Group members and then among key Haitian officials, for a set of policies to unblock election preparations and ensure that the senatorial elections occur as constitutionally mandated before January 2008. In the interim, the GoH must not sacrifice timely indirect elections, which are essential to Haiti's decentralization process and general democratic development. The international community and Prime Minister Alexis are generally supportive of our platform, and all agree that we should bring the issue directly to the attention of President Preval. End summary.

Getting From Here to There

[1](#)2. (U) Both indirect elections and senatorial elections are in jeopardy, according to elections experts at MINUSTAH and USAID. The GoH's original objective was to complete indirect elections, thereby establishing a permanent CEP, early enough so that the permanent CEP could organize senatorial elections in November or December 2007. (Note: In French, the permanent electoral council and the provisional electoral council share an acronym, CEP, referring to "conseil electoral permanent" and "conseil electoral provisoire." End note.) With indirect elections stalled as the current CEP awaits the passage of a new law governing the process (ref C), the GoH needs an alternative way to move forward with senatorial elections before the terms of 10 senators expire in January 2008. Bearing in mind the three months the CEP says they need to complete indirect elections and the three months of preparation needed by MINUSTAH to help the CEP

organize senatorial elections, the GoH cannot wait until the indirect elections are complete before beginning the senatorial election cycle.

Director General is Key

13. (C) Counselor Victor Benoit, serving as interim director general, has a poor track record, having taken five months to conduct run-off races for just five percent of local and municipal seats. Most recently, Benoit announced to MINUSTAH elections expert Marc Plum that he will fire most employees from the communal and departmental election offices (French acronyms BEC and BED) effective August 1. These employees are charged with organizing indirect elections, and by firing them Benoit is further delaying the process. Benoit is unhappy with Preval's disregard for the CEP and has threatened to 'go into hibernation,' according to Plum. President Preval has the authority to name a new director general to head the electoral bureaucracy who could run the indirect elections while simultaneously preparing for the senatorial elections. Additionally, a new nine-member council (or the same council with a renewed mandate) is necessary to certify senate results. It is within Preval's power to accomplish these steps.

Core Group Approaching Consensus

14. (C) The Core Group ambassadors met on July 5 to discuss the pending senatorial and indirect elections. The Ambassador presented the above concerns about senate elections, indirect elections and the creation of a permanent CEP, emphasizing that we can move separately on the two sets of elections without linking or sequencing them. Representatives of Canada, Brazil, France, Argentina, the EU

PORT AU PR 00001240 002.2 OF 002

and the UN were generally supportive of our position. Canadian Poloff added that the GoC does not have any confidence that the current CEP and DG are competent to run the senatorial elections, and that the populace could question those results given the CEP's perceived ineptitude. The group agreed to raise the elections issue with Preval, beginning with a written communication prior to an in-person meeting with the Core Group ambassadors.

15. (C) The Ambassador spoke with Ambassador Boucher (Canada) on July 10, who said he would prefer to ascertain President Preval's stance on elections before submitting a written document from the Core Group. Ambassador Boucher was resistant to putting any pressure on Preval before speaking with him personally, but agreed that a written communication might be useful afterward. Boucher agreed to raise the issue with Preval in their July 11 meeting.

PM Weighs In: Appoint a New DG

16. (C) Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis told the Ambassador on July 16 that he is very concerned about upcoming elections, and he has already recommended to President Preval that he appoint a new CEP DG. Alexis also recommended to Preval to move immediately to push a new elections law through Parliament. Alexis assured the Ambassador that the GoH is committed to holding elections for one-third of the Senate by the end of the year, and recalled that he and Preval had been in the unfortunate situation of governing with less than a full senate during Alexis' first term as PM (1999-2001). The Ambassador emphasized that the elections are of great importance to the international community, especially those providing election funding, to which Alexis replied that we should bring our concerns directly to Preval's attention.

Getting the Message to Preval

17. (C) Comment: Bearing in mind the timelines, the senatorial elections must move forward independent of the indirect elections. Timely completion of indirect and senatorial elections is a crucial step in bolstering the establishment of constitutional democracy and reinforcing the Preval government's legitimacy. To that end, we are seeking to unify the Core Group around this issue and to codify that position in writing. We are working with the UN elections office and the Canadian Embassy to finalize the text of a non-paper to present to Preval prior to a face-to-face meeting. Despite his public statements, Preval has not taken any action to keep elections on track. Our goal is to make a strong presentation of our position to Preval because we are not confident that he will make the necessary preparations on his own.
SANDERSON